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ABSTRACT

This paper describes first year implementation efforts of Southwest Texas (SWT) State University to develop a system to integrate planning, budgeting, assessment, and quality to improve the delivery of education and other services to all the institution's customers. The document addresses the common situation when an organization already has offices and/or directors of each of these functions and professional and territorial issues must be addressed. The organizational development model being used is the Capability Maturity Model and its five stages (ad hoc processes, repeatable processes, standardized processes, measurement, and continuous improvement) are explained. The history and lack of formal linkage between each of the four processes at SWT are reviewed as are initial informal initiatives for integration. A long-term vision of integration is outlined in terms of ideal objectives. Specific activities to realize this vision accomplished during the first year and remaining activities are reported. These include: sharing reports from the strategic planning consultant and state auditors with the university community; replacing university planning committee with a small cross-functional team representing planning, budgeting, assessment, and quality; formalizing an assessment process; establishing indicators; and developing feedback loops. (Contains 34 references.) (DB)

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FIRST YEAR REPORT: PROGRESS MADE ON A PLAN TO INTEGRATE PLANNING, BUDGETING, ASSESSMENT AND QUALITY PRINCIPLES TO ACHIEVE INSTITUTIONAL IMPROVEMENT

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This paper was presented at the Thirty-Sixth Annual Forum of the Association for Institutional Research held in Albuquerque, New Mexico, May 5-8, 1996. This paper was reviewed by the AIR Forum Publications Committee and was judged to be of high quality and of interest to others concerned with the research of higher education. It has therefore been selected to be included in the ERIC Collection of Forum Papers.

Jean Endo
Editor
AIR Forum Publications

Abstract

Most institutions of higher education today have planning, budgeting, assessment and quality processes in one form or another and at different stages of development. At a large (21,000) comprehensive public institution in Central Texas, the officers who direct these four processes have been developing a system to integrate planning, budgeting, assessment and quality to improve the delivery of education and other services to all the institution's customers. These officers share their vision, as well as their progress in the first year of implementation to move from a state of fragmentation to integration.

FIRST YEAR REPORT: PROGRESS MADE ON A PLAN TO INTEGRATE PLANNING, BUDGETING, ASSESSMENT, AND QUALITY PRINCIPLES TO ACHIEVE INSTITUTIONAL IMPROVEMENT

Introduction

Every decade, higher education emphasizes a different area of management, usually following in the footsteps of business; some irreverently call these "fads". The new idea of the '70's was budgeting: zero-based, incremental, PPBS, etc. The attempt to improve administrative functioning was the ill-fated Management by Objective (MBO). In the '80's, strategic planning suggested as a means to position institutions more competitively in a shrinking market. In the '90's, both assessment and quality initiatives currently receive a great deal of attention.

While it is easy for many administrators to simply shift gears from one approach to another, by creating separate offices to handle each new focus, lack of integration can lead to results that actually cancel out the effects of one or more of the initiatives (R. Johnson, 1995). For example, if a plan does not drive the budget, the budget will drive the plan. If resources are not allocated to implement a plan, the plan becomes an empty document. If quality is seen as a separate initiative, it will not be central to every process, in every office, to every individual on campus. If the results of assessment are not used to improve processes, to improve quality, to change plans for the future (i.e., if you do not "close the loop"), then assessment too becomes an empty process. Planning cannot survive without a budget. Neither planning nor budgeting can survive with integrity without assessment. And assessment is necessary to identify areas to target with quality principles that need to be planned and budgeted.

At Southwest Texas State University (SWT), the administrators in the offices of planning, budgeting, assessment, and quality are working together to integrate these processes to improve the institution. SWT is a comprehensive public institution with an enrollment of 21,000 students. The University was founded as a normal school in 1899, and has seen its mission change and enrollment grow since that time. SWT is located in a rural town about halfway between San Antonio (the third largest city in Texas and the ninth largest in the U. S.) and Austin, the state capital and home of the land grant and flagship institution, The University of Texas.

Literature Review

The Relationship of Planning, Budgeting, Assessment and Quality

The literature on strategic planning, budgeting, assessment and quality as individual processes in higher education is extensive. An ERIC search alone from 1982 to 1995 uncovered 34,557 citations on planning, 2,380 on budgeting, 35,042 on assessment, and 23,227 on quality. There is also a body of literature focusing on the inter-relationship of two or more of these processes, but this is somewhat less extensive. For example, from 1992 to 1995, there were only 36 citations that include planning, budgeting, and assessment and these do not necessarily discuss the inter-relationship of the three processes. Most references to quality are in a generic sense and do not, until some in the '90's, refer to quality as is meant in this paper: total quality management or continuous quality improvement.

The relationship of planning and budget has perhaps the longest history and the greatest amount written about it over the last twenty-five years (Hartley, 1968; Merson, 1979; Chaffee, 1981; Hearn, 1988; S. Johnson, 1992; College of DuPage, 1993; Nevada University, 1993; Sheldon, 1994). The other pairs of processes are addressed much less often, for example: assessment and quality (Ewell, 1991), (Sherr and Teeter, 1992); planning and quality (King, 1989); planning and assessment (Gardiner, 1989; The Commission on Colleges, 1989; Cohen, 1994); budget and quality (Forum, 1990; Marchese, 1990); assessment and budgeting (Messina and Fagans, 1993; Church, 1994).

Assessment, planning, and budgeting are referenced in many more sources, but few reference quality in the terms of TQM/CQI, and most do not interrelate the three processes (Pickens, 1982; Dijkman and Savenije, 1983; Barak, 1986; Temple, 1986; Kentucky University, 1989; Alabama State Commission, 1991; Popovics and Jonas, 1992; Bogue and Bogue, 1992; Brown and Johnson, 1994; Nicodemus, 1994; R. Johnson, 1995). Lozier (1982) discusses planning, budgeting, assessment, and quality, but not TQM/CQI. Knepp (1992) describes the University of Michigan experience as having a quality approach to strategic planning, and budgeting and planning systems, with assessment as an implied aspect of quality planning.

It may be that some organizations adopting a TQM/CQI approach have successfully combined these areas without realizing it, particularly if the organizations did not already have a planning director or office, an assessment director or office, or a budgeting director or office, or any combination of the three since TQM/CQI approaches certainly envelop planning and assessment. Or it may be that some organizations simply adopted a TQM/CQI orientation into their planning function as they had previously integrated assessment into that function. Thus, it may be no surprise that the literature reflects so little integration since, under some conditions, integration occurs naturally.

This paper focuses on the more common situation, however. It addresses the issue of what to do if your organization does have a planning director or office, an assessment director or office, or a budgeting director or office, or any combination of the three and now has been asked to graft a TQM/CQI approach onto those operations. While this integration could theoretically occur with ease, it is unlikely to do so if previously-established offices with already-hired directors with professional or territorial issues between them must themselves do the integration. Our paper is about how to integrate the four functions under such conditions.

Organizational Development Model

The model of organizational development which is essential to the implementation as well as the integration of planning, budgeting, assessment and quality is the Capability Maturity Model (CMM). CMM is a model used for software engineering developed at the Carnegie-Mellon Software Engineering Institute, which can be translated wholesale to explain organizational development as well. The model is developmental; i. e., one needs to go through each step and learn from that step before progressing on to the next. On must crawl before walking, walk before running, etc. Inspiration for the CMM came from 30 years of similar software problems, Total Quality Management principles, and process management concepts of Crosby, Deming, Juran, etc. (Paulk et al, 1991; Weber, et al, 1991).

The five stages or maturity levels of the CMM are: Ad Hoc Processes, Repeatable Processes, Standardized Processes, Measurement, and Continuous Improvement. At the initial or ad hoc level, processes are undefined and success depends on individual effort. Since the United States values independence very highly, it is not surprising that we are most comfortable at this level, and most of our processes and, by extension, our institutions are at level one. At the second level, processes are codified enough that they can be repeated the same way the next time, and successes can be transferred to other applications. At level three, processes are standardized, and documented. An assembly line is perhaps the most extreme example of standardization. If the worker is left at this level, though, boredom develops. Level four includes measurement so that the quality of the process itself as well as the output of the process can be evaluated. All of us in higher education know this as assessment or evaluation. At level five, the data from level four is used to improve the process in a continuous improvement loop, i. e., TQM or CQI.

With this model in mind, it is easy to understand why most of us are having trouble with the assessment and quality movements in higher education, as well as elsewhere in our culture. Most of us, and faculty in particular, are operating at level 1 and very happy to be there. We can design our work, modify it as we please, face each challenge as if it were the first time, and practice the independence that has been instilled in us. Documenting and standardizing our activities, our

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processes, is threatening because we see it as tying our hands, forcing us into a model, stifling our creativity. We don't want to be robots that just repeat things over and over. Unfortunately, if we don't have standardized processes, we have no way to assess the quality of our products, because we don't do the same thing twice! We cannot evaluate, assess without measurement, and measurement assumes consistency and predictability. Only with these measures can we hope to improve our processes and implement Total Quality Improvement.

Many accept these principles for manufacturing, for software engineering, for financial transactions, but certainly not for anything creative - not for teaching! Our biggest obstacle to establishing integrated quality processes of planning, budgeting, and assessment will most likely be the resistance to standardizing processes, which is essential. You cannot improve what you cannot measure, you cannot measure what is not standardized, you cannot standardize what is not repeatable, and you cannot by definition repeat anything that is ad hoc. If we in higher education don't embrace the Capability Maturity Model or something very much like it, our efforts at instituting assessment and quality from the top on an infrastructure that cannot sustain them, are doomed. Assessment and TQM will be in the dust bin with MBO, zero-based budgeting, etc.

Background

The planning, budgeting, assessment, and quality processes at SWT, as at most universities, are in different offices, different divisions, under different directors with little or no formal linkages among them. Each is at a different stage of development. Below is a summary of each of these processes, with a brief overview of the history of each.

The Planning Process at SWT

In the early 1980's, the University began to develop a comprehensive strategic planning process. The result has been a broadly-based, top-down procedure involving the collaboration of faculty and staff.

Shortcomings noted during evaluations of the planning process in the late '80's and early '90's were the sparsity of monitoring the University's progress toward its goals, and the often missing link between planning and budgeting. In the Spring of 1995, an external consultant conducted an evaluation of the strategic planning process at SWT. After reviewing all the pertinent planning documents, the consultant interviewed a cross-section of the university community to assess their knowledge of, participation in, and opinions about planning at SWT. Her recommendations will guide the development of the planning process during the upcoming planning cycle (Watts, 1995). The main recommendation were:

- Develop and communicate an institutional vision.
- Reduce the number of institutional goals and objectives.
- Clarify the roles of different parties in the planning process.
- Establish measurable goals and objectives.
- Monitor the plan at the institutional level, especially requiring accountability from those who receive strategic plan funding.
- Support the effort to link planning, quality, assessment and budgeting.

Budgeting at SWT

SWT's budgeting processes have, as in many higher education institutions, followed the approaches used in business: planning, programming, and budgeting system (PPBS); zero-base budgeting; performance budgeting, formula budgeting, cost-center budgeting. One generalization is true, however: the budget drove the plan. The former vice president in the Finance Division held the entrenched belief that "SWT will have a budget, whether or not it has a strategic plan." This attitude

provided an obstacle to having the "plan drive the budget." Planning was limited by budgetary constraints. New funding was often distributed proportionately among divisions based on size. However, salary increases were distributed across-the-board. Within the divisions, any new funding was distributed politically, with the squeaky wheel always receiving funding.

The impetus for breaking the cycle of the budget driving the plan came from another division. The Executive Vice President funded the Budget Director's first attendance at an NCHEMS workshop titled "Linking Planning with Budgeting". The arrival of a new president in 1990 introduced the principle that resource allocation is based on data in line with goals and objectives as outlined in a written action plan. Once institutional acceptance had been established for the budgeting/planning process, the challenge became delivering resources to established institutional priorities and thereby establishing "credibility" for the plan. During the past four years, an additional $11 million has been added to the institution's annual operating budget. In order to receive new funding, departmental account managers had to identify items in their strategic plans that would further SWT's mission. This influx of resources provided the necessary assurances to schools and departments that SWT was committed to the strategic plan.

Assessment at SWT

While some SWT offices and departments had effective assessment procedures in place during the late 1980's, it was the 1989 Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) recommendation that prompted a campus-wide assessment initiative. The SACS recommendation encouraged the University to "move more expeditiously to accomplish the assessment of baccalaureate graduates in each academic major and program area." In response, an Assessment Task Force was formed and charged with the responsibility of designing a comprehensive assessment system that would provide a vehicle for consistent examination and improvement in academic and other programs.

The 1991 Assessment Task Force Report served as a basis for the organization of the current assessment program at SWT. That report recommended that an assessment office be established, an assessment director appointed, assessment activities be decentralized to the offices of the vice presidents of the five university divisions, and an assessment advisory committee named to assist the assessment director in facilitating program review and assessment throughout the University.

Assessment activities underway within each of the five university divisions have three common components:

1. Objectives and outcomes to be achieved are specified.
2. Techniques for assessing the accomplishment of stated objective and desired outcomes are selected and implemented.
3. Assessment results are utilized to facilitate improvements in student learning, quality of support services and the overall effectiveness of institutional operations.

While there are common components characterizing assessment activities across university divisions, the manner of execution of assessment initiatives is quite different. These different approaches include cyclic program review including a comprehensive self-study reviewed frequently in-house and periodically by external consultants; departmental assessment plans; qualitative, attitudinal measures; before-and-after, value-added assessments; alumni, client and employer satisfaction surveys; focus groups; self-assessments; "on-line" and traditional suggestions boxes.

A report is prepared every six months summarizing assessment activities that have occurred within each division. These "Assessment Updates" not only keep the university community informed but also may prompt comparative assessment initiatives across divisions.

The SWT Quality Initiative

The SWT Quality initiative began formally on June 3, 1994, building upon elements of a quality approach which already existed in the SWT culture. The SWT Quality initiative is championed by a

Quality Team made up of ten individuals from the faculty and staff. The Team is charged with creating and implementing team training for those areas, divisions, and departments who volunteer to be a part of the initiative. The SWT Quality Team is guided by the six SWT quality principles: visionary leadership, employee empowerment, dynamic teamwork, decisions based on data, customer satisfaction, and continuous improvement.

In the first year, seven teams met regularly to improve processes identified by their teams' Executive Sponsors, the five vice presidents. Each team had a team leader and a facilitator who worked together to focus the team on process improvement using quality tools. Using the same approach, teams were formed during the second year. These teams are involved in improving the processes related to parking enforcement, registration, graduate student enrollment, procurement, and new employee orientation.

Twenty-nine facilitators have been trained and are currently working with teams. The Quality Team also offers training in a number of areas, including the Principles of Quality, Team Training, Team Leader Training, Executive Sponsor Training, Customer Satisfaction, Personality Inventory, and Effective Meetings. In addition, six faculty and staff members have been certified by the Steven Covey Institute to offer the Seven Habits of Highly Effective People seminar. More that 300 faculty and staff are expected to complete the seminar during the 1996 fiscal year.

Informal Initiatives for Integration

The initial steps taken toward integration at SWT have relied on the collegial relationship among the administrators who direct the four processes, their dedication to the betterment of the institution, and their willingness to work across organizational structures to facilitate change. In addition to this general philosophy are several specific activities that help bring the processes closer together.

Committee Membership

The administrators of the four processes, or their representatives, sit on each other's committees. The quality and planning officers sit on the Assessment Advisory Council. The assessment and budget officers and a Quality Team member sit on the University Planning Committee (UPC), and visa versa, a member of UPC is on the Quality Team.

Process Linkages

Planning and Budgeting. The budget officer, in his budget development guidelines, emphasizes the link to the strategic plan. The budget request forms specifically require account managers to justify requests for new money through reference to their strategic plan. In addition, during the current budget reallocation process, the president has stated that the purpose of the reallocation is to fund strategic planning initiatives, since the institution does not expect significant increases in state formula funding in the near or medium future.

Quality and the Plan. On the agenda for the strategic plan retreat for the 1998-2004 cycle which begins in 1996 is a discussion of the relationship of quality to planning. Specifically, the quality statement written by the Executive Planning Council has been used as a springboard to develop a vision for the institution. Key quality indicators will be included in the plan, and will be developed with the Assessment Advisory Council.

Planning and Assessment. The outcome measures for SWT's agency plan reported biannually to the Governor's Office for Budget and Planning have been developed in the past by the University Planning Committee. In the future, the UPC and the Assessment Advisory Council will work jointly on this project and integrate measures into the internal strategic plan. EPC members annually assess progress on their goals and objectives at a group meeting, the results of which are captured in writing. EPC members are encouraged to replicate successful initiatives/programs, and to identify and suggest

solutions for weaknesses impeding progress. The pilot SACS Compliance Audit addresses compilation of measures to demonstrate compliance with the SACS "must" statements and will result in measures that will be used in the strategic plan.

While all these activities are useful, they to some degree are based on the personalities of the individuals involved, not on institutional structures or processes that will perpetuate and expand the integration, once achieved, if there is a change in administration. Therefore, the administrators of these four processes have outlined a vision for the future, and further activities and processes to move SWT from its present to its ideal stage of development.

Long-term Vision

Change for the sake of change is wasteful of organizational resources and human energy. To avoid such waste, change efforts, whether personal, organizational, or cultural, most profitably begin with a description of the end to be achieved. Even more advantageous is a description of the most desirable end, the ideal objective, so as to inspire greater effort as well as a means of assessing progress. Achieving this objective will bring significant changes to the University. An ideal picture of those changes follows.

Every employee is knowledgeable about SWT's mission and goals.

Traditional change efforts begin with a core of believers who share some beliefs of what is good for the organization (or culture). These believers then devote themselves to creating change, even over the objections of others in the same organization, since they know what should be done and are willing to do what it takes to achieve their ends.

However, this model is inadequate for the modern organization. While it may be the case that change necessarily begins with a small group of knowledgeable persons, those individuals have an obligation to lead their colleagues to share their vision of the organization. Indeed, to be knowledgeable means to do more than to recite; it means to understand. Thus, the ideal state occurs only when every employee knows and can discuss the mission and goals of the organization. Even more, in the ideal state, each employee would know how his or her division or department contributes to the overall mission and goals, and perhaps most important, how his or her job contributes to that same mission and goals.

The highest goal of each employee is organizational improvement.

In SWT's ideal state, employees regularly ask how they can improve the organization. Organizational improvement is the overarching goal that drives their thoughts and actions. While on the surface this seems an obvious and likely goal, some comfortable and powerful practices must be relinquished.

First, employees will not first consider what personal benefit they will derive from an act or a decision. "What's in it for me?" is not the primary consideration when making decisions or taking action.

Second, territorial behavior will be eliminated. Divisions or departments do not attempt to prosper at the expense of other divisions or departments. In fact, the welfare of the organization is put ahead of the welfare of any division or department.

People plan and assess in order to improve processes and programs.

In SWT's ideal state, assessment and planning occur in order to evaluate how well the organization (or its parts) is doing and in what direction the organization (or its parts) should go. This seems such an obvious statement that perhaps, again, one must note the discrepancy between the ideal and what passes for it in reality.

First, in the ideal state, assessment will be a meaningful activity. Employees will want to do it because they want to know who well they are doing and how they can improve. They will create meaningful measures and honestly evaluate their productivity.

Second, planning will be an integral activity. Employees will be actively involved in creating and executing the plan. Each will know what the plan is and how he or she contributes to the plan.

Third, the data gathered will not be used to rank, sort, or punish those whose outcomes are somehow lacking in relation to others. Instead, data will be used to plan and budget to improve divisions and the organization as a whole. With the fear driven out of the work environment, the fourth outcome, administrators' trust in data will be achieved. The elimination of suspicion and distrust, common in current assessment activities, will allow data gathering and data analysis to become the responsibility of units for whom the data are critical.

Budgeting is based on the ongoing assessment of programs which are driven by quality principles.

In SWT's ideal, programs in divisions and departments regularly and meaningfully evaluate their products. This evaluation produces data which can be understood by other employees and permits those empowered to create budgets to do so in light of data. Thus, decisions are based on data.

Just as important, programs follow other quality principles. Leaders are role models who encourage organizational improvement through empowered teamwork. Employees are empowered to make the decisions relevant to their areas of expertise and experience.

Continual assessment of outcomes occurs in an atmosphere of trust and encouragement. And all these experiences are evaluated in terms of how well the customer is satisfied with the organization's products.

Using these quality principles produces an organization which has data with which to evaluate its success. These data can be used to make budgeting decisions. How those organizational decisions are made, that is, in what direction and for whom, becomes the task of leaders. Their job is make decisions which both improve the organization and provide an atmosphere in which employees can continue to live up to these ideals without fear of harm.

These four indicators of the ideal objective are themselves ideals. As such, they are unlikely to be achieved. They will, nevertheless, encourage higher aspirations and achievement that could realistic but limited goals.

Steps to Get from Here to There: The First Year Experience

Within the context of the Capability Maturity Model (Paulk et al, 1991; and Weber et al, 1991), SWT is at the first stage of organizational development, the "ad hoc" stage. The highly developed processes for planning and budgeting are characteristics of stage three, where standard methods are used to address problems, where individuals refer to policies and procedures drafted to assure that the same types of problems are addressed in the same manner across the institution, and over time. Assessment is the core of stage four, where measurement and analysis are used to gather data on the effectiveness of products and processes. Quality is at the apogee, stage five, where continuous process improvement is optimized. The steps described here are examples of the types of training and tools necessary to move the institution from stage one through stage two, characterized by repeatable processes, to stage three, then four and five, so that the integration of planning, budgeting, assessment and quality is successful.

Following is the initial list of activities and processes to establish a closer linkage among planning, budgeting, assessment, and quality. The are presented in order of expected completion. Included are activities accomplished during the first year, and those still on the drawing board.

Reports from the Strategic Plan Consultant and the State Auditors will be Shared with the University Community, and Recommendations will be Implemented (by 1996).

The May 1995 consultant's report on the strategic planning process, along with strategies to implement the recommendations, was shared with Executive Planning Council (the president, vice presidents and the academic deans) and University Planning Council in September. EPC focused on integrating planning at the department level more closely into the strategic planning process. Activities to effect this are covered in the "Education ... " section below. One of the major flaws found by the consultant was the lack of monitoring of the plan, assessing progress toward goals and objectives, and using the results of assessment to improve the process. The consultant's report is the main external force used to justify the plan to integrate these processes on campus.

The recommendations from the consultant's report was on agenda at the Spring 1996 planning retreat for EPC. The strategies suggested were endorsed for implementation to begin in the Summer 1996. The major changes requested by EPC were: inclusion of the Council of Chairs, vice presidential councils and the Assessment Advisory Council to expand community involvement in the planning process; and focusing the PBAQ team on coordination and integration of the planning, budgeting, assessment and quality processes across campus.

The nascent PBAQ team in early Spring 1996 responded to the state auditors' draft findings on planning, budgeting, assessment and quality. Their findings were in concert with the consultant, and add another external impetus to improving these processes.

Replace University Planning Committee with a Small Cross-Functional Team Representing Planning, Budgeting, Assessment and Quality (by 1996).

At the Spring 1996 EPC strategic planning retreat, this recommendation was discussed. UPC was replaced with the core group comprised of the Chief Planning Officer, Chief Budgeting Officer, and Chief Assessment Officer and Chief Quality Officer who will prepare all technical support documents for EPC and training the university's planners, budgeters and assessors. An expanded group will be used to obtain input for developing objectives and measures for the strategic plan, developing the planning guide, developing the monitoring system, and devising strategies to integrate planning from all levels of the organization.

Annually, the core team will offer education in the planning process at SWT to those responsible for developing plans at all levels.

Communication of Planning Cycles and Initiatives, Budgeting and Assessment, Education, etc. will be Improved (by 1997).

There has been no activity on this item. Since EPC has recently endorsed the integration plan and the recommendations to improve the planning process, various media will soon be put into place to keep the institution informed of the requirements of the planning/budgeting/assessment process. The institution will be kept informed of planning initiatives that are funded through the planning cycle, and the success of those funded initiatives which are annually assessed. This communication will be made through routine, standardized reports via either a specific newsletter, or through the established university newsletter, or another method which is found to be most effective.

Formalize the Assessment Process Across Campus (by 1998).

A variety of assessment activities have been implemented in the last year or so. The Assessment Advisory Council has watched over a decentralized approach to assessment, but has recently suffered an identity crisis, since their activities have been fairly superficial. The fragmented activities undertaken include the assessment of the strategic planning process by an external consultant; assessment of planning, evaluation and quality by the state auditors; assessment by the PBAQ team of the recent budget reallocation process; and consideration of alternative certification for

the upcoming SACS reaccreditation visit.

In anticipation of the 1999 SACS site-visit, members of the Assessment Advisory Council have developed SACS compliance audit questionnaire based on the SACS "must" statements for academic programs. The questionnaire is being reviewed by academic deans, with a planned implementation date of Summer 1996. A set of defined assessment measures has been developed and is being reviewed. Two sets of measures will be defined: a set for which the numbers will be generated from the institutional database for departments, and a set which must be generated by the departments. Next, this model will be shared with the complete Assessment Advisory Council to adapt it to non-academic areas.

The Council of Academic Deans has instituted a periodic special meeting on assessment. These meetings allow the deans to focus on assessment issues, such as a debate over the merits of cyclic vs continuous improvement review processes, and the linkages to the strategic plan.

In the near future, the role and scope of the Assessment Advisory Council need to be clarified. That and a budget for assessment activities at least equal to the budget for quality activities would see a flourishing of assessment activities. The next step would be communication of these activities to the community to "share the wealth". The results of assessment will allow us to "close the loop" (see "Feedback Loops ..." below) and embark on continuous improvement.

The evaluation of the recent budget reallocation process on campus is an example of the PBAQ team working in concert. The President stated at the beginning of the reallocation process that the quality of teaching, research, services, support would not be adversely affected through this budget intervention, and that new uses for the reallocated funds would be tied to strategic plans. The evaluation conducted of the process assessed the impact on departments, the effect on quality, types, or amount of service delivered, linkages to the plan, etc.

A future activity being contemplated to link planning, budgeting and assessment is the selection of several departments across divisions to assessment the connection between resource allocation/reallocation and their plans. For each of these departments, an historical assessment of resource allocation will be made to establish a baseline of information, and compared to current processes. Each of the departments will then be followed for at least three years. The results of annual assessment will be reported to the unit manager, as well as aggregated into an institutional report with recommendations for change given to the President' Cabinet. The specific departments will then be revisited annually to track any changes made in response to this assessment.

Access to Data for Assessment will be Improved (by 1998).

The institution is developing a data warehouse, which will facilitate easy and broad access to data for reporting and assessment activities. The data warehouse is currently in its pilot phase, focusing on student data. Once the pilot is completed, the warehouse will be built and expanded to meet the needs of the university community. Some of those needs are currently being identified within Academic Affairs as their identify the assessment measures they need which can be and must be included in the data warehouse.

Indicators will be Established (by 1998).

Indicators have been incorporated into the last three Agency Plans submitted to the Governor's Office of Budget and Planning. The indicators were developed by University Planning Committee and the Assessment Advisory Council, with input from all constituencies. The NACUBO benchmarks for financial operations are being piloted by the Finance Division.

One of the challenges in the near future is the tracking of data to measure progress toward the indicators in the external Agency Plan and apply them to measuring progress on the internal strategic plan. The Assessment Advisory Council will begin to address this challenge in Summer 1996, informed by the SACS Compliance Audit measured being developed. The experience the Finance Division has

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with the NACUBO benchmarks will help shape the benchmarking curriculum to be taught by the Quality Team to other staff.

An Education Program will be Established (by 1998).

While the director of quality is trained well in quality principles, for the directors of assessment, budgeting, and planning to successfully integrate their processes with a TQM/CQI, they must also be trained in quality principles. All three directors have attended SWT Quality training sessions and national or state conferences focused on quality. In addition, the director of planning is well-schooled in assessment and budgeting and the director of budgeting has similar abilities in planning. The SWT Quality Team has been training faculty and staff in quality principles. Through 1995, 238 have received training in quality principles and tools; 127 have received training in Covey's Seven Habits. Three sessions on assessment tools and techniques are scheduled for Spring/Summer 1996. The linkage between planning and budgeting is stressed annually at budget workshops.

In the future, to give managers the quality tools and principles to plan, budget and assess their processes, training sessions will be held for new managers to orient them to the processes and expectations at SWT with respect to planning, budgeting, and assessment. These sessions will start with small groups of individuals identified for their openness to new ideas and leadership skills. These "missionaries" will work at different levels and different parts of the University to influence the planning, budgeting and assessment processes in their areas. With feedback from the first trainees, the curriculum or delivery method may be modified; then more staff will be trained. Once the quality approach to planning, budgeting and assessment is imbedded in the culture, annual courses will be given to new managers, with periodic refresher sessions offered to continuing managers to keep them informed of any changes in the processes or expectations that have occurred.

A few academic departments will be worked with to develop a model for involvement of faculty in planning at the department level. Once activities have been identified, training will be given faculty at the beginning of each planning cycle. One strategy being proposed to effect this involvement is competition for strategic plan dollars to implement planned activities.

While 44 individuals have been introduced to the Capability Maturity Model through system development lifecycle training in FY96, this philosophy needs to be expanded in the community, as well as presented to and embraced by the upper administration. Training in CMM is on the drawing board.

Feedback Loops will be Developed (1998).

While the above initiatives are a good start, without a feedback loop to assure that assessment results are used to improve processes, all these activities will be futile. However, training in quality principles and the "Plan, Do, Check, Act" cycle for decisionmaking should set the stage for automatic feedback as SWT matures into phase three of the Capability Maturity Model.

Specifically, a proposal has been made to conduct case studies of several departments regarding their use of indicators, assessment of activities, and feedback to improve their plans. These departments will be tracked for three years. The results from the studies will be used to develop a model for a closed-loop planning process, and will be shared with the community.

Conclusion

The next challenge will be for Southwest Texas State University to implement all the activities mentioned here, and to monitor their effectiveness. The University can measure its progress toward its ultimate goal, a planning and budgeting system that follows quality principles and has assessment as an integral and essential part of the process. Whether or not SWT achieves its ideal, striving for it will most surely improve the institution for all its constituencies.

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